

**GOOD AMERICANS**

Something strange is going on, or rather, not going on. Before the onset of the war on Iraq, upwards of 4,000 people turned out at the Federal Courthouse to demonstrate our opposition to Bush's war policies. Now we're two and a half years down the line. Casualties, deaths and disabling injuries are on the rise. The war efforts are gobbling up billions of dollars each month. Where are all the people?

I know it's August, but back in the bad old Vietnam-era days we never let that stop us. Some powerful social phenomenon seems to be occurring, making this generation into "good Americans," akin to the "good Germans" of the 1930s. This war is patently illegal, being waged immorally, and it is devastating our social safety net. Our Iraqi allies are spectacularly unsuccessful in developing an effective security force, busy as they are warring among themselves.

But what are we busy with? I'm sure a major demonstration is planned for sometime in September, when vacationers and students are back. If ever there was a time to get involved, this is it. We need to build momentum in opposition to this bestial war. I know how I'll answer my grandchildren's questions. How will you answer yours?

*Paul Prensky  
Eugene*

**TERRIBLE REPORTER**

As a minutes recorder to the city, I attend every city meeting that Alan Pittman attends. In my four-plus years of doing so, I have been ceaselessly amazed at how different our reports on the activities of our elected officials are. But then again, I am paid to be accurate. The article on the city manager (8/4) by Mr. Pittman, however, was the last straw. Without a shred of journalistic ethics, he lambastes the city manager as someone who controls all information and therefore has all of the power. Nothing could be further from the truth.

He claims that Mr. Taylor has been publicly uncivil. This is patently false. I have never witnessed so much grace under fire in my life. Mr. Taylor is a boon to this city. He's a wonderful, kind-hearted man who treats everyone with equal respect and has truly taken the city's best interests to heart.

Just who does Mr. Pittman think is running this city? Just how could a progressive town like Eugene be taken over by business

interests? City staff, the same city staff that are continually vilified for one thing or another, are largely made up of progressive people who traveled alternative paths through the 1960s and '70s and wear Birkenstocks on the weekend. This town has an incredible commitment to fairness, to the environment, to recycling, and to progressive business policies. Eugene is a model community in many ways. Yet Pittman plants unhappiness in every article he writes.

And this new progressive council? We have a council made up of seven Democrats and one Republican. Before the election we had a council that often ended in a vote of 5-3. The only real difference is that our mayor is more progressive. There has not been a profound change in city governance with this new so-called "progressive" council.

I watch Mr. Pittman take his notes during meetings. He stares at the ceiling if it doesn't interest him, writes down anything he can meld into controversy, and disregards the rest. He's a terrible reporter and I have reached the point where I can't stand *EW* because of him.

I am a die-hard liberal. This letter has nothing to do with politics. I just can't stomach another piece of pseudo-journalism written by your favorite hack, journalism that pretends to be truth, sows controversy like pernicious weed, and merely seeks to rile the left and sell advertising. Mr. Pittman should go write for the *National Enquirer*, where he belongs.

*Ruth M. Atchenson  
Eugene*

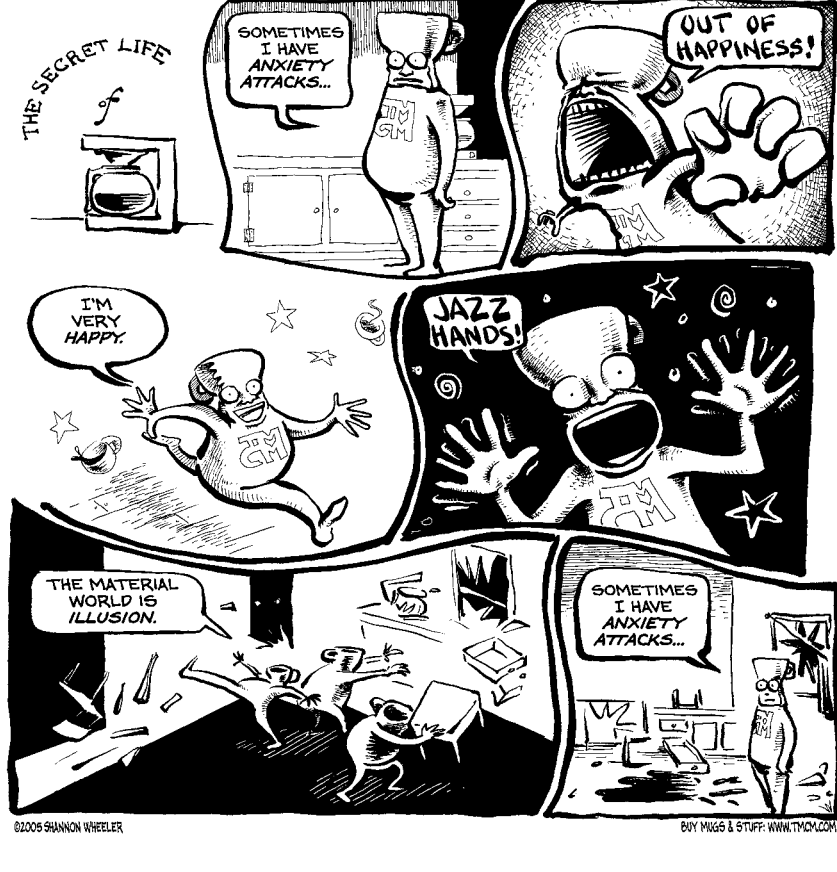
EDITOR'S NOTE: The reporter never claimed that the city manager was uncivil, but he did quote two city councilors in that regard, along with a city employee with a contrary opinion. In fact, the vast bulk of the story is simply quoting public records.

**WHY INCENTIVES?**

Gary Rayer thinks that driving a hybrid car makes its owner special ("VIP Parking for Hybrids," 8/11). He wants the city to offer parking incentives to these special persons. I would like to know how hybrid vehicles contribute to reducing traffic congestion and urban sprawl, and lessening the need for more parking lots.

I have a better idea. As our mayor wants "incentives and other encouragements for sustainable practices," let's offer them to people who are full-time public transit users and bicyclists. I am a member (and special per-

**TOO MUCH COFFEE MAN** BY SHANNON WHEELER



son) of this latter group. I'd like to see friendlier bicycle parking options; wider, cleaner and safer bike lanes; traffic lights favoring bicycle riders; and a yearly tax-deductible incentive of \$250 for the upkeep and maintenance of my bicycle.

Encouraging an actual reduction in the number of motor vehicles on our roads seems to me an ideal "sustainable practice."

*Robert Simms  
Eugene*

**BUSH'S SECRETS**

I appreciated Brian Bogart's excellent "America Programmed for War" (Viewpoints series beginning 7/28). The basic Bush administration position on the U.N. and international law is to coerce U.N. nations into making international laws the way the U.S. administration wants them or else the Bushies will take the international law and shove it.

Some of the details of the Bushies' war program have been revealed by numerous whistleblowers, but many are still hidden behind the Bushies' Great Wall of Secrecy. If all of their secrets were revealed to the public,

impeachment would be swift and certain, for the crimes, in total, are grossly offensive and break numerous laws and commandments.

It is time to replace a dominion-based civilization that relies on guns, bombs, germs, steel, oil, pollution, war, waste, propaganda, poverty, gluttony, heavy SUVs and degradation with a decency-based civilization that relies on compassion, reuse, recycling, universal health care, solar power, wind power, wave power, other non-radioactive and non-polluting power, peace power, education power and truth power.

If we do not replace gluttony, pollution and war with reason, a healthy environment and peace, then we will take the future and shove it.

*Bob Saxton  
Eugene*

**GOOD DEEDS**

In these times when we are bombarded on the news with images of people doing awful things to each other, I just had to mention a couple of happenings today that reaffirmed my belief in the goodness of our fellow human beings.

**CAN WE GROW AND IMPROVE?**

I want to express my appreciation for the article "Clear as Mud" (7/28) because it highlights several of the difficulties the city faces when trying to create pedestrian and transit friendly Mixed-Use Centers (MUCs). The city's goal with MUCs is to accommodate growth in a way that actually makes the city better. This requires a fundamental change in the built environment that is economically feasible, socially beneficial, sensitive to neighborhood character and property values, affordable, and consistent with state law. Obviously this is no easy task!

The article, coupled with experiences in implementing MUCs and discussions with neighborhood groups over the last several months, highlights a few ironies and conflicts inherent in this undertaking:

- The city of Eugene's growth management policies encourage in-fill, mixed-use, redevelopment and higher density development, while maintaining the character and livability of individual neighborhoods. Adopted policies also discourage expansion of the Urban Growth Boundary to provide new developable land away from established neighborhoods.
- Some people discourage development of MUCs near the edge of the city, but many also see the neighborhoods nearest the city core, which are typically already zoned to allow higher densities, as most deserving of preservation.
- Commercial areas are thought to hold great potential to accommodate high concentrations of new residences, but high density living is already allowed in most commercial zones. If it were easy and marketable to do, why isn't the market providing more homes in commercial

areas now? Should the city offer incentives to promote this?

- A common complaint is that higher density living results in taller buildings near low density homes. Even if new dwellings were steered toward the upper floors of commercially zoned properties, they would often still abut lower-rise residences.
  - The process of customizing solutions for each potential MUC is already too slow and expensive, but there is a desire for more public involvement in the process. That would add more time, expenses, or both. (Don't worry: there will always be substantial opportunities for public involvement in Eugene's Mixed Use program.)
  - Some do not want MUCs on streets with heavy traffic, but the traffic is needed to support the retail businesses the neighborhoods want.
  - Neighborhoods understandably want high quality, aesthetically pleasing development, and possibly the opportunity to dictate what type of commercial activity locates in a MUC, but we do not want so many regulations that the city appears to be anti-business.
- Add these few examples with the city's limited general fund and uncertainties brought by Measure 37, and it is clear that creating MUCs will be a slow process of experimentation and collaboration with the community as a whole. If successful, Eugene may grow and improve over time — a worthy goal. The Eugene Planning Division looks forward to working with local residents and businesses towards this end.

*Kurt Yeiter  
Principal Planner  
Eugene Planning and Development Department*